AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-54. (Canceled)

55. (Currently amended) A method of binding superabsorbent particles to cellulose fibers, comprising:

providing binder-containing cellulose fiber, the binder-containing cellulose fiber comprising cellulose fiber having hydrogen bonding functional sites and from about 1 to 40% by weight based on the weight of the cellulose fiber of a binder comprising a non-polymeric diol;

thereafter combining superabsorbent particles having a hydrogen or a coordinate covalent bonding functional site with the binder-containing cellulose fiber; and

using the binder to bind the superabsorbent particles in particulate form to the binder-containing cellulose fiber.

56. (Canceled)

57. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 55, wherein the nonpolymeric diol is present on the cellulose fiber in an amount ranging from 1 to 25% by weight based on the weight of the cellulose fiber.

58. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 55, wherein the cellulose fiber comprises wood pulp fiber.

59-64. (Canceled)

65. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 55, wherein the binder is propylene glycol.

66. (Canceled)

67. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 65, wherein the binder is present on the cellulose fiber in an amount ranging from 1 to 25% by weight based on the weight of the cellulose fiber.

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68. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 55, wherein the binding step is carried out at a temperature less than 150°C.

69. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 55, wherein the combining step comprises adding superabsorbent particles in an amount ranging from 1 to 80% by weight of the total weight of the superabsorbent particles and cellulose fiber.

70. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 55, wherein the combining step comprises adding superabsorbent particles in an amount ranging from 3 to 40% by weight of the total weight of the superabsorbent particles and cellulose fiber.

71. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 55, wherein the binder is trimethylene glycol.

72. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 55, wherein the binder is ethylene glycol.

73. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 55, wherein the binder is dipropylene glycol.

74. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 55, wherein the binder is butylene glycol.

75. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 55, wherein the binder is 2,3-butane diol.

76. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 65, wherein the cellulose fiber comprises wood pulp fiber.

77. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 72, wherein the cellulose fiber comprises wood pulp fiber.

78. (Previously presented) A method of binding superabsorbent particles to cellulose fibers, comprising:

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providing binder-containing cellulose fiber, the binder-containing cellulose fiber comprising cellulose fiber having hydrogen bonding functional sites and from about 1 to 40% by weight based on the weight of the cellulose fiber of a binder comprising a hydroxy acid;

combining superabsorbent particles having a hydrogen or a coordinate covalent bonding functional site with the binder-containing cellulose fiber; and

using the binder to bind the superabsorbent particles in particulate form to the binder-containing cellulose fiber.

79. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 78, wherein the hydroxy acid is lactic acid.

80. (New) The method of Claim 78, wherein the hydroxy acid is present on the cellulose fiber in an amount ranging from 1 to 25% by weight based on the weight of the cellulose fiber.

81. (New) The method of Claim 78, wherein the cellulose fiber comprises wood pulp fiber.

82. (New) The method of Claim 78, wherein the binding step is carried out at a temperature less than 150 degrees C.

83. (New) The method of Claim 78, wherein the combining step comprises adding superabsorbent particles in an amount ranging from 1 to 80% by weight of the total weight of the superabsorbent particles and cellulose fiber.

84. (New) The method of Claim 78, wherein the combining step comprises adding superabsorbent particles in an amount ranging from 3 to 40% by weight of the total weight of the superabsorbent particles and cellulose fiber.

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